

#545 January 26, 1979

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN TAIWAN

"Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

The establishing of diplomatic relations between the United States and Communist China was not unexpected, but it has made us all feel very sad.

At this point, when our country is facing such difficulties, we must all rely on the steadfast faith and courage which come to us from God and strive together to protect the security and freedom of Taiwan.

Let us pray that God will give us sincere and open hearts so that, no matter whether we are high or low, no matter which province we come from or which party we belong to, we may all work together to preserve the existence of Taiwan.

Let us pray that God will give the leaders of our country wise judgment in the present and the courage necessary to lead the whole nation to face reality and find a new and effective way to guarantee the freedom and security of our people.

Let us pray earnestly that God will continue to guide our country and lead us towards a more democratic, more equal, more free and more just society. In the present difficult circumstances may every one of our citizens be able to participate in political action to save our country; that held together by our common identity we may further the goal of gaining greater international respect.

We believe that if our government and people can face the present realities and bring about a political reformation our anger and sorrow will be transformed into strength and awareness of our own responsibilities; self-reliance will replace useless recriminations and despair; and if we work together to build a society founded on democracy and the rule of law then God will certainly open up a bright road in front of us."

WENG Hsiu Kung
Moderator

KAO Chun Ming
General Secretary

(In response to this appeal, the Central Committee of NCCJ, at its 8th meeting, Jan. 18th, 1979, expressed its heartfelt concern for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. A letter of sympathy and support signed by YAMADA Jo, NCCJ Chairperson, was addressed to Mr. Weng and Mr. Kao. Reprinted here are some excerpts from that letter.)

"...We were deeply impressed by your unshakable trust in God and your strong love of the whole people in Taiwan's present difficult situation.

We praise God's Holy Name knowing that you our brothers and sisters... have kept peace in your heart by trusting in God's unchangeable grace in this age of rapid change and continue steadfast in your decision to pursue mission. We believe that you will serve the people further in obedience to the Lord's will by continuing to seek to establish democracy and human rights in Taiwan....."##

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NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Each year 60 million people visit various shrines and temples during the first week of the New Year. To the Japanese mind, the New Year doesn't seem to be here without this custom and ritual.

New Year's celebrations using the Gregorian Calendar were begun in 1860 by the newly-crowned emperor Meiji, who used them to celebrate the origins of the emperor's line, stressing his decendency from the gods. The various religious rites and ceremonies were used by the Meiji government to bind the people to the emperor's throne in order to eliminate the ruling power of the Tokugawa bakufu which had controlled Japan for 300 years.

The imperial household continues to carry out this celebration of the New Year following the original form that insured the emperor's political dominion. Ceremonies last for three days. The first day ceremony is called "Saitan-sai" and consists of worshipping the four corners of heaven from the shrine in the south court of the imperial grounds. The second day is used for receiving people's visits to the imperial grounds, and the third day, called "Ganshi-sai," celebrates the descendance of the emperor from the gods of heaven. The fourth day is the beginning of work in all public offices and the fifth day is used for the New Year's banquet at the imperial household.

The custom of New Year's celebrations among the people has become widespread, following the pattern of the imperial ceremonies.

In local communities where the farmers follow the lunar calendar for agricultural purposes the New Year is still celebrated according to the lunar calendar. (This year the lunar New Year corresponds to Jan. 28 on the Gregorian calendar.) For them the New Year celebration is a joyous occasion celebrating the first signs of spring, and new start of rice cultivation for an abundant harvest in the fall.

This year, all the major English-language newspapers in Japan carried front-page pictures of the emperor and the imperial family on the first and the second days of the New Year. Japanese newspapers, however, sensitive about the rebirth of the past images related to the emperor, carried the pictures of the imperial ceremonial activities on the inside pages, thus keeping the ceremonies the emperor's private matters. 44

PRIME MINISTER OHIRA VISITS ISE SHRINE

Since former prime minister Sato began visiting Ise Shrine on Jan. 4 in 1969 as a symbolic gesture before his New Year's press conference, this ceremonial visitation has been continued by every prime minister of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Ise Shrine, in Mie Prefecture, commemorates the goddess "Amaterasu" and contains the treasure seal of the Imperial throne as the shrine's holy of holies. Japanese modernization beginning in the Meiji era (1868-1911) was deeply conditioned by the power of the nation's Shinto shrines organized hierarchically under the Ise shrine with its connection to the emperor's religious rites. Through conflicts surrounding this growing power of the emperor's so-called divinity and its connection with Ise shrine, and through the enforcement of worship requirements on all people making Shinto the national religion 200 people became political prisoners and 50 people were executed by the state for their refusal to worship the Shinto gods. (*Shukyo danatsu o Kataru* by Iwanami Shinsho.)

The present Constitution in Japan clearly stipulates a separation of state and religion. However, the emperor still continues his former religious rites, and government officials chosen by the people visit Ise Shrine as messengers of the emperor. On Dec. 27, 1978, Rev. KIMURA Tomomi and five other members of the NCCJ Committee on the Yasukuni Shrine Problem tried to visit Prime Minister Ohira, who is a Christian. They met Mr. Kato, the vice-secretary of the Prime Minister's official residence, and requested that Mr. Ohira's visitation to the Ise Shrine on Jan. 4 be cancelled. A statement which they handed to Mr. Kato mentioned Mr. Ohira's evangelical work during his youth and emphasized the importance of the separation of religion and state.

During the Jan. 4 press conference which followed Mr. Ohira's visit to Ise Shrine, a Mainichi journalist directly asked the Prime Minister his reason for visiting the shrine despite the fact that he is Christian. Mr. Ohira answered indirectly by saying that he had read a book written by a foreigner which pointed in amazement at the tolerance of Japanese religions for belief in many gods.

The Yomiuri Newspaper commented editorially that if Mr. Ohira had not gone to Ise Shrine he would have faced rejection by the conservative groups in the Liberal Democratic Party as well as a storm of protest and criticism from right wing groups which would have detrimental effects on him and the party in local elections this coming year. The news-

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paper questioned Mr. Ohira's understanding of freedom of religion and expressed concern about a political setting strong enough to force a Christian prime minister to attend such a centrally important religio-political function at the Shinto Ise Shrine.

The Asahi Newspaper pointed out Mr. Ohira's unfortunate and unhappy situation in having compromised his faith as a politician, in contrast to former Supreme Court judge Fuji-bayashi who retained his faith as a Christian in the final court ruling in the case involving the July 1978 Shinto ground breaking ceremony on public property in Tsu City.##

(Compiled from the Asahi, Mainichi and Yomiuri Newspapers)

A Happy Ending EASIER LOANS FOR KOREANS IN KAWASAKI

"When you see something that is wrong, you've got to say so, and you've got to continue saying so until the wrong is recognized and made right," said Mr. BAE Jung Do, executive secretary of the Research-Action Institute for Koreans in Japan (RAIK), as he discussed the action of a community group in Kawasaki that successfully broke a long-standing pattern of discrimination by a local loan company against local Korean residents.

The story began in March, a year ago, when Bae applied to his neighborhood branch of the Kawasaki Shinyo Kindo (Kawashin), a loan association, for a personal loan to buy a piano for the use of his daughter, who is taking lessons. Bae filled in all the forms and was told he would be advised later whether his application had been accepted. When the bank clerk called, it was to tell him that his application had been refused. Bae's qualifications and credit ratings were good, but the problem was his legal status. He is a Korean resident in Japan and by the Japanese Nationality Laws, he is classified as an alien. He did not have the family registration papers held only by Japanese. The wide use of these registration papers for financial purposes works a hardship on all foreigners, but especially for Korean residents, who constitute 86.3 per cent (1977 statistics) of the "foreign" population.

When members of the mothers' club of the Seikyusha Kindergarten heard about Bae's case from Dr. In Ha LEE, who is principal of the kindergarten as well as pastor of the Kawasaki Korean Christian Church which sponsors the kindergarten, they decided to call a community meeting. The refusal to

lend to a Korean was a problem that touched all of their lives. Sixty persons came and organized the "Kashin o Tadasu Kai" ("group to accuse and correct the unjust attitude of the bank").

The day before their scheduled visit, however, a Kawashin representative appeared at the kindergarten to explain that the refusal of Mr. Bae's application had been a "clerical error." Bae could come for his loan any time. The committee members decided not to cancel their meeting. There were too many questions about the real reason for the original rejection and the actual policies of the organization. Kawashin representatives agreed to hold three meetings with the Tadasukai to discuss the problem.

As the issue being raised at Kawashin became known, the base of support widened. RAIK helped to coordinate relationships with other groups, as Korean church young people wrote letters and Korean and Japanese churches also backed the effort.

Kawashin's explanation was that the clerk had confused the requirements for a Personal Loan with those for a Home Loan, which does require the borrower to present family registration papers (or nationality identification papers). Koreans could, they said, make applications for Personal Loans on the basis of their alien registration and would be welcomed. Refusing to admit any acts of discrimination, the bank officials said they considered the matter closed and would not meet again.

The Tadasukai was not fully satisfied, however. The explanations given by various people in the bank had been inconsistent. There were reports of other refusals similar to Bae's. And there were unanswered questions about the fairness of the requirements for Home Loans. With the third meeting arbitrarily cancelled by the Kawashin, members felt they had no choice but to make a public appeal.

On a busy Saturday in May, sixty people--many of them young mothers with children, but others too, young and old--appeared at the bank with signboards and handbills, explaining their cause to surprised customers.

Their encounters with customers proved a good opportunity for education on the problems
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CORRECTIONS:

In the December, 1978 JCAN issue (#544), column 2, par. 2: Toda *Isuke*, not Isaku. Page 5, column 2, par. 2: Asako *Miura*, not Miyura.

We would like to apologize for any inconvenience these mistakes may have given our readers. ##

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that Koreans in Kawasaki face:

"You're inconveniencing a lot of people."

"Yes, we know, and we're sorry about that, but we agreed on three meetings and bank officials refuse to hold the third one. This is the only way...."

"Mr. Bae can buy his piano now. Doesn't that solve the problem?"

"No, not really. The problem is to recognize that discrimination is being practiced."

"What percentage of the foreigners are Koreans?"

"What's your guess?"

"Twenty per cent?"

"Ninety per cent!"

Long after normal bank closing hours, while Tadasukai members still waited to see "someone who could speak for the bank," clerks finally promised to see personally that bank officials fulfilled their promise to meet for a third time with the group, and everyone went home.

When talks resumed, it was on the basis of a small committee of four representatives of the Tadasukai and four from Kawashin. Reports of instructions given not to lend to Koreans and use of a form for Home Loans that called for Japanese nationality papers were evidence that Kawashin had been following a discriminatory policy. Finally this was acknowledged, and the pledge made that the form would be revised and loans granted on the basis of an alien registration.

Home Loans were a different story. Due to the large amount of money involved in such loans, they are insured and insurance companies demand that the applicant have Japanese nationality papers. Loans for homes can be made through other channels without nationality papers, but the rates are extremely high, and far beyond the reach of Korean families.

Kawashin's original defense was that, inasmuch as the requirements were spelled out in the standard contract form of the insurance companies, it had no responsibility. Insurance company representatives confirmed the conditions, although refusing to show the actual contracts. But, as the effect of this policy on Korean residents was probed, even Kawashin officials came to the point of recognizing it as a kind of "institutionalized discrimination," in which they have participated, a policy unfair to a large sector of their community.

At last on Oct. 6, at the end of seven months of meetings, Lee, representing the Tadasukai and Mr. KAWABE Kenji, a senior member of the Board of Directors, put their seals on a joint statement that set the matter straight. Kawashin admitted it had discriminated against Korean applicants for a period of some three years; it would revise its system and not allow this to occur again. It assumed responsibility for the necessity of the sit-in by Tadasukai members in May. And it would look into the establishment of a separate fund for Home Loans that would enable foreigners to borrow on the basis of national health insurance or alien registration, thus opening the market for Home Loans to Koreans.

"We Koreans get turned down so many times, we get the feeling that there's no use trying. The tendency is to give up because we don't have any power. We've got to get together with others like ourselves, who don't have any power individually, and stick with it until we make it right."

"There are lots of similar cases of discrimination in Kawasaki," continued Bae. "We've got to insist that things that are wrong are recognized as wrong and corrected. That'll make it a better place to live, for us and for Japanese, too."

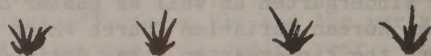
His words seem borne out by a new kind of cordiality on the part of Kawashin toward the Korean members of the community. They are invited, even urged, to make Personal Loans. A new respect was demonstrated for the Seikyosha Kindergarten when a representative of Kawashin showed up at the Christmas party in December with a gift.

The Ministry of Finance position has been that a distinction should be made between "foreigners" who are tourists, and those who hold alien registration cards and reside in Japan; and that the latter should not be discriminated against for not having nationality papers. However, the ministry does not take any measures to assure that such discrimination does not take place, and the restrictions imposed by insurance companies on the granting of Home Loans are one of the hard-set discriminatory practices.##

by Helen POST

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION:

Very special thanks to LaVerne KROEHLER for doing the 1978 JCAN index. Thank you for doing all that hard work!



"LORD, WHEN DID WE
SEE YOU IN PRISON"

(The news of Rev. Moon Ik-hwan's fasting and Rev. Yun Ban-ung's critical condition in prison was received recently. During the 8th Central Committee Meeting of the NCCJ this message was approved to be sent as an act of solidarity to Korean friends in struggle.--Eds.)

"Brothers and Sisters at the Emergency
Friday Prayer Meeting:

We are moved as always to learn and think of you following the will of our Lord in the midst of difficulties and hardships. We can find no words to console you, but pray that the merciful Lord will be with you this very day indeed, and protect you, and comfort you. We pray that the Lord will give special support to the Reverends Koh Yong-gun, Kang Hi-nam, Cho Hwa-sun, Park Hyung-kyu, and other prisoners of conscience and their families.

In order to bring to you this deep concern of ours we of the Central Committee have decided to send a representative to be with you. We are praying that we may be able to support your struggle of faith by any means possible. In so doing we further pray that we will be able to take part in your suffering. Our decision to send a representative is an expression of this prayer and hope. The witness you are carrying out has not only inspired us in Japan, but also held out a light of hope to every church in the world. To many, it is a precious sign that shows the Kingdom of God that is to come.

May God let the Kingdom come in response to the prayers of every Christian. May justice and His will be done in Korea and in Japan.

Blessings of God be upon you all." ##

WITNESS OF THE CHURCH AMONG JAPANESE LABORERS

In 1872, 25 years after the first Protestant church in Japan was organized, KAGAWA Toyohiko in Kobe and YAMAMURO Gumpei in Tokyo began spreading the Gospel beyond the circle of middle class churches to people at the bottom of society.

In the early years of Japan's post-war economic development, in 1956, 40 concerned Christians formed a group at Naniwa church in Osaka to encourage urban-industrial mission among the lower strata of society. For the first time in Japan, they sent out seminary students to live with factory workers to learn about their actual lives. Two of these students, after graduating

from seminary, were assigned as full time workers in this labor ministry, which was the beginning of Kansai Labor Ministry (Kansai Rodosha Dendo or Ro-Den).

Toward the end of 1978 the Shinkyo Publishing Company published a book edited by Dr. TAKE-NAKA Masao in appreciation of the people and churches which have contributed to the work of this labor ministry over the past 20 years. The book, entitled "Seeking the Image of Working People" (Hataraku Ningenzo o Motomete), is a compilation of various materials and resources from the Kansai Labor Ministry which have appeared in other publications during these two decades.

The role of labor ministry in society is set forth in the energetic work reports and challenging questions raised in the book. Most important is the challenge to the Japanese churches, which tend to be oriented toward white collar workers and students. By experiencing God's work among laboring people, participants in Ro-Den have realized that God is at work among the powerless in society and that the church's responsibility is to seek after social justice as it is expressed in Scripture.

With this understanding, the movement which began with the "Student-In-Industry Project" soon added three more men and a woman. By 1967 a total of 31 students from Doshisha, Kansei Gakuin, and Seiwa were participating in the project, though the schools did not officially recognize the program in their curriculum.

The participants soon discovered that the so-called modern outlook of Japanese industry contained the pre-modern elements from the Japanese feudal "Family" system. Management morality was so low that companies had no concern for pollution control. The success of large corporations depended in many cases on the exploitation of labor-intensive subcontractors.

In such a situation a new understanding of the nature of the church was needed to balance and expand established theories of the church, as ministries based on social justice as seen in the Biblical context became more important than religion concerned only with individual salvation. The present chairperson of the "Rodosha Dendo" movement, Rev. MIYOSHI Hiromi, emphasizes in one article that it is "important to know the latent power of laborers who will participate in history. Our work is to cooperate with aims of other organized groups in practical ways by discouraging the division of workers. It is important for the church to practice its proclamation by restructuring social conditions." (p. 79)

The book outlines activities of the Ro-Den
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movement as it has tried to meet the needs of people under changing social conditions over the last 20 years. Materials include articles reflecting on the first 10 years of work written by the four original ministers, reports on activities, and other resource materials. Included is the discussion held in 1977 by participating members, along with an explanation of the past and present work and future prospects for the movement. In this material there are indications that since the symbolic Expo '70 held in Osaka, Japanese industries have moved into international markets to an overwhelming extent. Therefore, new dimensions for the Ro-Den movement are bound up with issues of social justice in an unjust world economy. The problems and concerns of Asian workers in places where Japanese industries are deeply entrenched are issues also for Japanese workers. The Ro-Den movement stresses that the time has come for Japanese and other Asian workers to go forward together by studying the differences and similarities in conditions and forces affecting workers throughout Asia. ##

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WOMEN LABORERS AGAINST NEW LAW

A Ministry of Labor research group released on Nov. 20, 1978, its recommendations for changes in the Japanese labor laws. These revisions, which were particularly aimed at women workers, would change maternity protection laws and suspend the current mandatory one-day monthly menstrual leave and the prohibition on all-night work for women. Previous to this, the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce had also announced similar recommendations of changes in the labor laws.

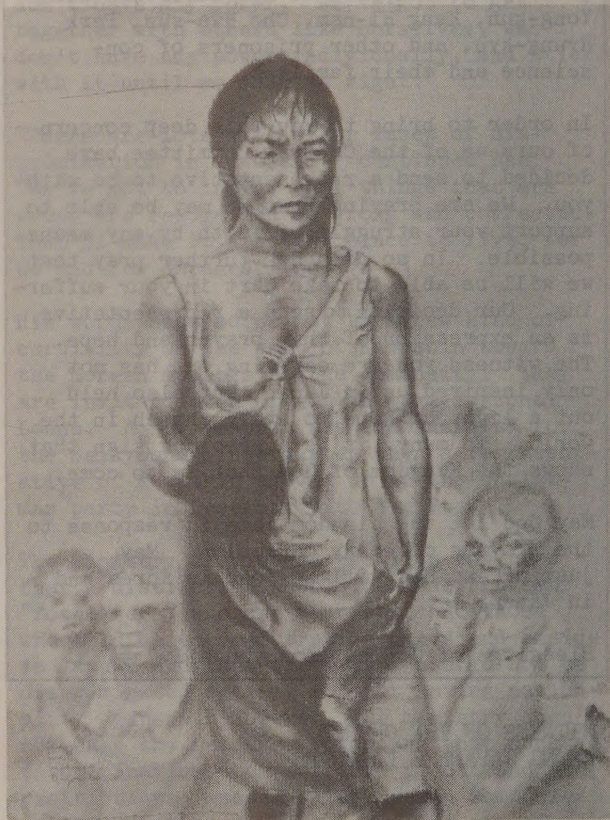
This move to change the present labor laws has brought forth many objections from working women and concerned women's groups. The detrimental effects of the proposed revisions appear to outweigh the advantages of supposedly creating equal working conditions. These working women indicate that women are not included in many aspects of the present socio-economic development because of discrimination against them in the present social structure. They say that if the revisions pass, some married women and others will be forced to leave their jobs as they are used increasingly in undesirable positions at undesirable hours. Married women at present make up 65.5% of the 12 million women workers (among the 65.5%, 10% are divorcees or widows), and a majority of women workers are part-time or day laborers.

Workers say that these revisions have been proposed by scholars who have no knowledge

or experience of the actual working conditions of women, and are using the revisions to support the interests of the Liberal Democratic Party and company managements. Women's groups are demanding that, instead of eliminating the present maternity protection laws, they should be raised up to the level of the ILO standard by limiting working hours to 40 hours per week.

The working women's struggle against revisions of the labor laws is derived from a knowledge of the difficulties of a repressive social system in which the only saving grace is the protection of the current labor laws. They say that such revisions should come about only after a survey of actual working conditions at the present time. ##

AYC



"MOTHER" An acrylic painting by
Filipino artist, Mr. Al Manrique.

BUDDHISTIC VIEWS ON WOMEN STILL PRESENT TODAY?

Buddhism in Japan has seen women as unclean beings who will never be able to elevate their minds and hearts. The customary belief in the impurity of women's blood is connected to the Buddhist understanding of the hereafter, in which hell is a sea of blood into which only women will fall. The salvation of women is

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Judging from the past year's newspapers, Japan seems embarked on a path toward re-militarization. Almost daily there were reports of statements by various government officials advocating an increased role for the Japanese Self Defense Forces (SDF), or even an eventual change in the Constitution to permit Japan to have "regular" armed forces (see JCAN #540). There were also many reports of the U.S. encouragement of a Japanese military build-up, with headlines like "U.S. Sees Room For Improvement in Japan's Defense," "U.S. Lawmaker Says Japan Should Revise Constitution," and "U.S. Wants Japan to Beef Up Defense Capabilities."

In this context it was striking to read the results of a recent poll on defense issues conducted by the Asahi Shimbun. According to the poll, 82% of the people support Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution which says that Japan "will renounce war and will not have any armed forces." When asked if they would support a Constitutional revision enabling Japan to have regular armed forces, 71% said no--an increase from 61% in 1962 and 42% in 1955. Twenty percent of the men surveyed were in favor of such a revision, along with only 10% of the women.

The factor most often given as the main reason why Japan has been able to avoid war since 1945 was "the tragic war experience" (selected by 33% of the women and 24% of the men), followed by "the people's efforts" (given by 22% and 16% respectively). The Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was selected by 18%, while 17% chose the Peace Constitution.

Even though the Peace Constitution was held in high regard, most people also recognized the legitimacy of the Self Defense Forces. Fifty-seven percent (62% of women and 52% of men) said that the SDF should be maintained at their present level, while 19% (12% of women and 27% of men) thought they should be strengthened, and 16% said they should be reduced or abolished.

When asked what was most important for the defense of Japan, by far the most responded "peaceful diplomacy" (42%), followed by "economic power" (20%), "the Peace Constitution" (15%), and "patriotism" (13%). Only 2% replied either "SDF power" or "support of America."

In another question, only 20% said that they believed that the U.S. would come to the defense of Japan in earnest in case of an emergency, while 56% said they thought it would not. These figures are probably related to the pressures which the U.S.

government is placing on Japan to increase its military role. In a recent letter to the Asahi Shimbun which began "Why Are America and China encouraging Japan's military expansion?", a writer pleaded, "Those Japanese people who don't want any war against any countries are making great efforts to stop Japan's military expansion. Please don't interfere with them. Discouraging Japanese militarism is the task not only of the Japanese people but also of the Americans and Chinese." ##

by David THURBER

(continued from page 6)

completely negated, and women are not able to become buddhist saints. (Notice the police stories on TV which use the word "hotoke" [buddha] only for male corpses). The great books of Buddhism state that women possess five evil natures: uncleanness, deceit, jealousy, anger, and vacillation. Buddhahood for women is only possible after they are first, in effect, changed into men. The disciplines that allow women to be more like men are said to be: to respect and keep Buddha's teachings, to follow knowledgeable priests, to not be devoted to secular family situations, to not have any evil thoughts toward anyone, to make the female body less conspicuous, and to realize the meaninglessness of secular activities. Women were taught three submissive attitudes: to submit oneself to ones father in the early stages of life, to ones husband in married life, and ones sons in old age. Sin meant allowing themselves to fall to a lower level of life, and women were obstacles for men because they were thought to be messengers of hell. Some areas (the sacred mountains of Hiei-san and Koya-san) where priestly trainings were conducted were legally off-limits to women from the Heian period (782-1198) until 1872. In the Kamakura era (1198-1334) "Amida" was believed to be the only avenue for the salvation of women and this belief was widely spread among women. Until the first quarter of the 20th century the practice of killing girl babies for financial reasons was common and ended only when government rule was enforced to meet the national emergency of wars. Buddhism has not yet completely opened its doors to women. The aching wounds of the past still remain in the subconscious and bring out a mood of resignation--a psychological handicap on women. The absence of human rights particularly in women's minds is deeply rooted in the Buddhist teaching of the wholesale rejection of women.

The Buddhist view became well-entrenched in people's daily lives in the Muromachi era (1392-1568). Combined with Confucian morals, this view became the backbone of the feudalistic society in the Edo era and carried on to the "House" system by the Meiji government, and continued until the end of World War II. ##

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